Court Told Letelier Spoke of 'Enemies'

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Michael Moffitt, the lone survivor of the 1976 car bombing assassination here that killed former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier, testified yesterday that Letelier had told him that he had "many enemies, especially the Chilean government" of military dictator Augusto Pinochet.

Moffitt, who escaped with minor injuries from the blast that also killed his wife, Ronni, told a U.S. District Court jury that when the Pinochet regime decided in 1974 to release Letelier after a year in prison on an icy island near Antarctica, a Chilean officer warned him about his future activities.

"Gen. Pinochet will not and does not tolerate activities against his government," the officer told Letelier, according to Moffitt, who added that Letelier "considered that a threat."

Moffitt said that the night before Letelier was slain on Sept. 21, 1976, as he drove along Washington's Embassy Row, the former diplomat also mentioned a threat on his life that an informant inside the Chilean Embassy here had recieved in a letter.

The 27-year-old Moffitt, an assistant to Letelier at the Institute for Policy Studies, a left-wing think tank here, gave his testimony about the threats against Letelier in response to questions from a defense lawyer for one of three staunchly anti-Castro Cuban exiles on trial in connection with the slaying of Letelier and Ronni Moffitt. But Moffitt's statements tended to buttress the government's contention that the killing of Letelier, an archcritic of the Pinochet regime, was ordered by the Chilean secret police then known as DINA.

Later in the day, the jury of seven women and five men heard Rivas Vasquez, deputy director of the Venezuelan intelligence service, testify that DINA officials came to Caracas in August 1975 to seek information about Chilean exiles living there who had served the ousted government of Marxist president Salvador Allende. Letelier, who held several positions in the Allende regime, himself lived briefly in Venezuela after leaving Chile in 1974.

Vasquez said that the DINA officials, led by the agency's director, Juan Manuel Contreras Sepulveda, asked that Venezuelan officials inform the Chileans whenever any of the exiles left Venezuela and provide their airline flight numbers.

But Vasquez said the Venezuelans refused to give the Chileans the information because his government "was not in agreement with the Chilean regime." Contreras has been indicted in the slayings of Letelier and Moffitt. He and two other DINA agents are being held in Santiago while the Chilean Supreme Court decides whether to extradite them to the United States to stand trial.

Vasquez also testified that he met with Guillermo Nova Sampol, one of the Cubans on trial on the Letelier-Moffitt murder charges, and two other Cuban exiles in 1974 as they passed through Venezuela en route to Chile.

But when Vasquez was asked by Assistant U.S. Attorney Eugene M. Propper to identify Novo in the courtroom, the intelligence official picked out Novo's brother, Ignacio Novo Sampol, who is charged with lying to a grand jury investigating the Letelier slaying, but not with the killings or the alleged conspiracy that led to them.

Judge Barrington D. Parker pointedly told the jury after Vasquez's testimony about the wrong identification and two other times during the day noted that the government's testimony did not relate to Ignacio Novo, only to Gillermo Novo and the third defendant on trial, Alvin Ross Diaz.

Parker also made an effort yesterday to limit the amount of testimony depicting the blood and gore associated with the slayings. After the government presented Moffitt's testimony, along with that of a policeman who was called tothe site of the explosion on Sheridan Circle, two passersby and the medical examiners who performed the autopsies on Letelier and Ronni Moffitt, Parker ruled there would be no more testimony describing the scene or the bodies. The government then proceeded to try to show a motive for Letelier's killing, his importance in exile activities against the Pinochet regime.

Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) testified that Letelier "sensitized" him to the issue of alleged human rights violations in Chile and made him "more inclined" to support 1976 legislation curbing U.S. economic aid to Chile until the Pinochet regime improved its human rights record.